

it. Could such a gathering have significance in migration, seasonal or nomadic population movements?

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10. ATTEMPTED FEEDING BY A SHIKRA *ACCIPITER BADIUS*,  
FAMILY ACCIPITRIDAE, ON BUFFSTRIPED KEELBACK  
*AMPHIESMA STOLATA*, FAMILY COLUBRIDAE

According to Ali and Ripley (1987), the food of the shikra *Accipiter badius* includes all live animals of manageable size, like mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and various insects. Its reptilian food includes various kinds of lizards, e.g. *Calotes versicolor*, *Mabuya carinata*, *Hemidactylus* sp., and *Lygosoma* sp. However, Naoroji (1985) recorded *Calotes versicolor* as its main food.

On January 7, 1999 while walking on the roadside along *Chander More*, a wetland in Murshidabad district, West Bengal at around 1400 hrs, I saw a shikra *Accipiter badius* cross the road in front of me and fly overhead, carrying a rope-like object in its feet. As it settled on an eucalyptus tree, some 70 m away, I moved quickly

near the tree and found it was holding a small snake, 30-40 cm in length. I identified the snake as a buffstriped keelback *Amphiesma stolata*, the commonest snake in this area. The shikra had, perhaps, captured it in the nearby marsh as it came from that direction when I first saw it. The snake was still alive, and in trying to free itself, had coiled around the leg of the shikra, which looked uncomfortable. A few minutes later it flew off with its prey and I could not see the fate of the snake.

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